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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/934,888	08/22/2001	Riho Takemoto	JP920000262US1	8155
25299	7590	12/01/2004	EXAMINER	
IBM CORPORATION PO BOX 12195 DEPT 9CCA, BLDG 002 RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, NC 27709			PENDLETON, BRIAN T	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2644	

DATE MAILED: 12/01/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/934,888

Applicant(s)

TAKEMOTO ET AL.

Examiner

Brian T. Pendleton

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 22 August 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7 and 10-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 8 and 9 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 22 August 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ishii et al, US Patent 6,148,243. Ishii discloses a sound processing method comprising personal computer 301 having built-in speakers 110 in figure 8. Docking station 102 contains a docking connector 109, display panel 106 and speakers 105. The computer 301 includes recognizing logic for recognizing an external connection situation. The switch 113 is opened in response to the docking situation and thus acts as an audio volume setting logic for muting the audio volume to the speakers 110. Claim 1 is met. As to claims 2-4, the external connection situation is the connection of the docking station 102 which is a peripheral.

Claims 5-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Kitamura, US Patent 6,704,421. Kitamura discloses an automatic multichannel equalization control system comprising a disk reader 14, equalization controller 16, and audio processor 24. The equalization controller uses equalization templates that are matched with the type of audio medium being played (hypothetical computer apparatus usage situations and corresponding

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audio volumes, the usage situations being as a CD player, as a DVD player, etc.). The equalization templates are stored and accessed whenever an audio medium is read by the disk reader 14. The audio volume is extracted from the equalization templates. Claims 5 and 6 are met. Per claim 7, the system comprises a built-in speaker, volume control logic (equalization controller 16), storage unit (eq templates 28), and recognizing logic (disk reader 14).

Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kunkel, US Patent 6,122,701. Column 2 line 60 -- column 3 line 3 discloses a mute option which is canceled when either the volume up bezel or volume down bezel is pressed.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kunkel.

Kunkel does not explicitly state a third mute canceling logic for canceling muting without changing the set value of the muted audio volume. Examiner takes Official Notice that the technique and benefit of canceling a muting operation by not changing the set value of an audio source was well known at the time of invention. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to employ such a technique for the purpose of reproducing the audio at the level last played thereby maintaining the consistency of the audio experience.

As to claim 13, it was notoriously well known to display the set value of an audio volume during

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muting. Per claim 14, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to change the output audio volume before muting is canceled in the situation where the audio source has changed during the muting. In such a case, the user would be induced to change the volume to correspond to the pending audio source. It would have been obvious and advantageous to have the audio output level set when muting ceases so that the user can resume listening to audio at an appropriate level without worrying about setting it.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 8 and 9 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brian T. Pendleton whose telephone number is (703) 305-9509. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Forester W. Isen can be reached on (703) 305-4386. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Brian T. Pendleton
Examiner
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